MICROCOSM
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Microcosm

Volume II - Number I **Fall, 1974**

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Microcosm, campus literary magazine, is published biannually by the Humanities Division of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College. The junior college, main campus Wesson, Mississippi, and branch campus Natchez, Mississippi, offers both academic and vocational programs.

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Early Morning

Plastic smiles welcome:
Steel frowns threaten:
Daydreams beckon:
Nightmares frighten.

Love makes friends:
War creates hate.
Charity tries to share,
Impatience can't wait.

Past flees and hides:
Future is calling:
My eyes are opening,
And Morning is blooming.

— Charlotte Taylor

The Chess Tournament

The two men sat facing each other across the chessboard. A handful of spectators circled their table, waiting for the outcome of the final match of the chess play-offs.

"Your move," said Black.

White leaned forward, studying his position.

"So this is a chess tournament. Big deal! There's no action at all," remarked one of the bystanders, a tall man about twenty-five years old.

White looked up and asked, "Then why are you here if you're not interested?"

The young man shrugged and turned away, but White continued, "You must realize the concentration chess requires. It involves thorough planning and intricate schemes. The action that does take place is preceded by careful mental work."

"Look, man, I'm sorry if I offended you, but I just can't understand how you can play such a useless, time-consuming game."

White moved his chesspiece cautiously and addressed the young man once again.

"If people thought life through as carefully as they do chess, there would be less chaos and more open-mindedness in the world today."

"How's that?" asked the young man.

Black made his move. White studied the board intensely before answering.

"Time is all it takes to understand. That includes understanding problems and other people. Patience--that's something everyone needs. Chess teaches you patience."

"Patience I can understand, but chess is a big waste of time when--"

"Check," interrupted Black.

"See, see! What has all that 'intricate planning' done for you? You're losing now--and you've wasted time. It's not the thinking that gets things done; it's the doing. That's true in life as well as in chess."

The young man folded his arms, well-satisfied with his defense.

White sighed. "Unfortunately, there's a majority of rash fools who feel the same way."

"It is not foolish to be a doer instead of a thinker!" The young man's anger was rising.

"Think about that," White said coolly, returning to the game.

The young man stood quietly looking at his feet.

"Check," said White. "Are you thinking?"

"Huh? Well--"

Settling back in his chair, White studied the young man.

"You don't play chess, do you?"

"Me? Uh, no."

Black moved his chesspiece.

"I--uh, I never--never had time to learn."

"Didn't think so," said White smugly. "Checkmate."

— Carol Cupitt

Ellisville's Muted Pain

Buckets of blood-
thrown against the wall
drip
slowly
down
and trickle 'cross the floor-
only to bump into ruptured hearts
torn

by spirited hands.

— Margie Smith

It

It happened several years ago but seems like yesterday. I had been cutting the lawn while my little brother, Jack, had gone hunting with Rip, his faithful ole bird dog.

Jack and Rip were in the woods constantly. Every chance he had he would go hunting. He loved going hunting and would always come home with a wild tale of how the old mute of a dog saved his life.

First it was from a bobcat and later from a rattlesnake. The old dog was a good animal but I think Jack sort of exaggerated his stories at times.

I had finished my mowing and shucked some corn to feed the chickens when Mama called me in the house. "Where is that brother

of yours?" she asked. I told her that Jack and Rip had headed down toward the creek hours ago. "I don't know what will become of that boy and his dog, his father has told him that he and that dog would go off by themselves one day and get in deep trouble." I told Mama not to worry, Jack could take care of himself. And he could too. He knew a lot more than I ever gave him credit for.

Night was setting in and Jack hadn't returned so I decided to do him a favor, for once. I took the corn I had shelled for him to feed Mama's chickens and started his chores. Not only did I feed the chickens for him but I fed the horses and his rabbits as well as his stupid pet skunk Rip had caught. At almost dark I began getting worried about my little brother. He was usually home from his hunting trips by this time. Somehow I felt something was bad wrong, but then I remembered Jack could take care of himself.

By supper time Mama was almost hysterical because Jack had not returned. My feelings of something being wrong returned again. I sure wished Daddy was here and not fifty miles off working; Jack wouldn't be taking all these little wild trips to the woods every time he got the notion.

Mama finally decided to send me out looking for Jack and I was certainly glad because by this time I was really worried. I got Daddy's 12-gauge and lit out down the darkening path toward the pine thicket where I knew my little brother always ventured. I called out and yelled to the top of my voice but Jack seemed to be nowhere around.

I continued walking through the woods and calling when suddenly I heard the faint barking of a dog. I knew it was Rip because I'd recognize that stupid bark anywhere. I headed in the direction of the bark as fast as my feet would carry me. I knew something was bad wrong because Rip never made that kind of racket unless he was in trouble. I was getting closer when I heard a scream that was Jack, I knew, and Rip growling and snarling; like I had never heard him before, getting louder and louder. Damn, I thought, he must have something by the nap of the neck. Then suddenly I heard Rip make a noise that sent a chill down my spine and he never made another sound. I felt a terror that I'd never felt before and I caught my breath and dashed toward the river where the last sound I'd heard came from.

There was just barely enough light left to see where I was going. When I rounded the curve and started down the hill I saw my little brother lying face down on the ground, his clothes all torn and blood all over him. A few steps away lay Rip torn to shreds, his limbs torn off. I almost turned sick at the sight of it.

I rushed to Jack and turned him over on his back. I realized he was still breathing and through tears and broken words I tried to get him to answer me. His face was all torn up like someone had taken a knife to it. Finally he opened his eyes and when he realized it was me, he smiled.

Jack began to try to mutter something but I told him to be quiet. He paid me no mind as he usually did and continued. "Ole Rip did it again, he saved my life. It was awful. It followed me through the woods," he gasped. "When I stopped, it stopped, when I walked, it walked and when I ran, it ran. It made no sound other than the sound made when it moved. It did not have eyes but yet it saw because it followed me."

I tried to quiet him but he continued talking. "It wasn't a human, really, I don't know what it was. It had long arms and short legs and smelled of stench. No rotten manure has smelled any worse. I got tired of running and stopped and it stopped. I turned and stared at it horrified and it seemed to be staring at me. I raised my gun and shot three times, reloaded and started to shoot again before it moved. I hit it each time I shot but the bullets didn't seem to affect it."

Jack paused for a minute and continued, "It started toward me. Rip just stood and barked while it swiftly approached me. When it got up close it reached out and grabbed me, picked me up and started scratching and clawing me. Rip started growling and biting at it with fire in his eyes. It seemed astonished as Rip tugged at its leg and it just held me in mid-air and then dropped me to the ground."

Jack's voice was getting weak as he went on, "It then reached down, picked Rip up and began what seemed to me like biting him about the neck. Rip made horrible noises and then it pulled Rip's legs off and threw them down one by one. It threw the body on the ground, turned looking at me and suddenly stampered off through the woods."

My little brother looked up at me and said, "Rip did it again, he saved my life." He smiled at me again and closed his eyes and I knew it was over. I gathered the body of my little brother in my arms and cried with a pain so deep I must have fainted.

Just a few days after the burial of my little brother I found out he knew more than I ever did. My grandmother told me all about it.

Many years ago in the early 1800's one of my great, great grandfathers was involved in practicing witchcraft with an old lady. The old lady was teaching my ancestor how to conjure up demons.

My grandmother went on to tell me that my early relative,

assisted by the old lady's son, was trying to conjure a demon when a terrible monster actually appeared and killed the only son of the old lady before he could send it back.

Grandmother told me the story had been handed down from generation to generation that the old lady had conjured a creature that would kill one male child out of the next twelve generations of my ancestor, and then disappear.

It could be traced back for eleven generations of our family that a male had been killed or had gone off in the woods never to return again since the time of my ancestor.

Grandmother remembered telling this old tale two years ago at Christmas in the presence of my little brother. About that time he took an interest in hunting.

My little brother knew that we were the last generation. He knew that either he or I would be the last victim which could send the old lady's demon back into the world of darkness from which it came. And he went out hunting it.

— Kenny Blair

Letter To Terra Mother

Hey Mothermom!!!--
Wrap me in your chlorophyll cloth
And press me into the soil.
Push me through your peaceful door
Until my spirit can rest once more.

Pull me back into roaring seas-
The place I really belong.
You see I'm like mama's poor lost boy,
Too young to find his way home.

Mother, it would be so fine
And I don't care what people will say.
They'll only look and a few will cry,
Though they hated me anyway.

Hurry, Mama! Let's leave so sudden
Without a sound or reason to be gone!
Come on, Mama, I'm feeling real sick
Come on, I wanna go home!!!

P.S.

Take me with you just this once and I promise
not to cry. Can't you see I'm so damned tired??
Aw, Mama!! lots of people die!

—Derrell Smith

The Courtship of Tharga-Roth

The dark fortress rose abruptly from the waving grass, clearing the surrounding obstacles easily. A familiar landmark in the area, it was the home of the territorial monarch, Tharga-Roth. He didn't build it, of course, nor had his ancestors. No one knew just when it had been formed, or by whom, but Tharga-Roth and his kind had long since put it to their own use. A stronghold of this caliber was hard to find and it was viciously defended against all usurpers.

Tharga-Roth had positioned himself at the highest point of the battlements to absorb the weak sunlight. Being early spring, the sun had yet to make its full power felt, and the fortress was not heated.

Sunlight was welcome on these chill spring mornings; but, this time, I sensed another reason for the monarch's position on top of the fortress. True, it was an excellent port from which to survey his terrain, yet, also, it made him more obvious to anyone who might be watching. Besides, he had traded his drab brown cloak for brilliant red and green. Tharga-Roth was displaying himself in all his finery, as was not his custom. Normally, he made himself as inconspicuous as the dead leaves on the turrets of his home. Such strange behavior on the part of the ruler was a puzzle to me, until I noticed her - a female of Tharga-Roth's own race - some distance from his stronghold.

The monarch had been too long without a mate and Tharga-Roth's actions were solely for her benefit. She was beautiful, too, after the way of her kind, a suitable queen for the master of the castle.

When it was apparent to him that she was watching, he pretended not to notice her. Tharga-Roth strutted on the battlements, making threatening motions at the world in general, and acting as if the female didn't exist. Sura (for that is what I have chosen to call her-not knowing her true name) also feigned indifference. Neither was fooled, of course, but their ancestors had chosen mates in this manner and so, too, must they.

Suddenly Tharga-Roth's cool threats took on a serious tone. I looked for the source of his agitation and wasn't greatly surprised to see that a second observer was also watching the proceedings, though with a more personal view.

A second male, also dressed in the red and green raiment of courtship, stood a little way off, partially hidden by the high grass. As Tharga-Roth turned to face him, the stranger walked into the open. Both remained motionless for some time, facing each other in

full view of the seemingly unconcerned Sura. A typical female, Sura was pleased that two such noble suitors sought her favor. It was obviously becoming harder for her to pretend indifference as her excitement mounted.

Tharga-Roth threatened once more, then scrambled from the walls of his castle to meet his challenger. When they faced each other on the bare earth below the fortress, the stranger began the ritual threats of the rival. These followed a certain pattern, dictated by custom and always the same. Tharga-Roth made the appropriate reply though no words were spoken: none were necessary. Their race's methods of selecting mates sounds severe, but they are not cruel, only necessary; for only the strongest could be allowed to marry, to insure the quality of future generations. If one of the rivals was weaker, it would be apparent to them both and the weaker would concede. Tharga-Roth and the stranger were too evenly matched; they had no choice but to fight.

No weapons were allowed, except those God gave them, since the death of either party was not desired, only the assertion of superiority by strength.

Each made one last threat and the contest began in earnest. They met halfway, both charging like unleashed demons, and soon it was impossible to tell where one gladiator ended and the other began.

Sura watched the battle with interest, though her face remained inscrutable. The ways of her gender are a mystery to all men, and I could not begin to guess what her thoughts were. Was she happy when Tharga-Roth began to get the upper hand? Did she care? Maybe it made no difference to her, since she was already promised to the victor. The laws of her race left her no choice but to accept the winner, as the rivals had no alternative but to fight for her.

What about the countless lesser creatures in Tharga-Roth's domain? Did they notice the trials of their king? I watched them scurry about their tasks, some carrying white bundles, others dragging the spoils of their hunting back to their hovels to the waiting mouths that were never filled. Did they care? They took no notice that I could detect. Perhaps they had witnessed such battles before. To the common folk, maybe one king was the same as another. At any event, they seemed to realize that there was nothing they could do. They continued their work, seemingly oblivious to the fact that their monarch fought not only for a queen, but for his throne as well.

My attention was brought back to the battle by the cease of movement where the rivals had been striving for dominance.

Tharga-Roth stood in the clearing, his only motion, the heaving of his sides as he tried to catch his breath. The stranger had left, no doubt hastily, after his defeat. As soon as his breathing had returned to normal, Tharga-Roth climbed to the battlements of his fortress and resumed his former vigil, as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred.

Sura did not move for many long minutes, and I had begun to wonder if she ever would, when she moved slowly to the base of the fortress, and then without haste and with queenly dignity, she climbed to the battlements to join her master. Together they would now complete the cycle that nature had laid down so long ago.

I watched the two little green lizards sunning themselves on the blackened stump in my back yard a while longer; then I rose from my position on the back steps, stretched my legs, and went into the house.

— Ricky Parks

Autumn

The leaves are pale and trembling, like some lover who mourns

the dying.

Till with the wind's first sighs, they fall to cover the yet

unborn.

On Autumn's breath the seeds are sown to winter graves where

they will dream.

And their dream shall wake them with its warmth.

Yet now they sleep.

—John Lowry

Thunderclouds

The afternoon sun filtered through dark clouds to shine on an old, weathered house in the country. On the roomy front porch were an old woman in a rocking chair and a boy about twelve years old. He was lying on his back examining a crack in the awning.

"Thunderclouds are moving in," said the old woman, rising stiffly from her rocker. "Better bring the firewood on the porch."

The boy Robbie stretched his legs and prepared reluctantly for the job. "Yes, Granny," he sighed.

Robbie hopped down the steps and kicked along the sandy path to the woodpile. He had long regarded the woodpile as a faithful playmate. Often had it served as a cowboy-and-Indian fort, a pirate ship, or a mountain peak. Now, as he loaded kindling in his arms, he remembered last week's rocket ship game.

"Gotta tear down the launching pad," he muttered.

After three trips to the porch, the woodpile was half-way gone. Robbie was reaching for another load when he spotted a piece of dirty cloth peeking from beneath a small log.

"Hey, my parachute!" he exclaimed as he tugged out a rag of soiled cheesecloth.

In his excitement, Robbie let his load roll to the ground; then he scrambled to the top of the diminished stack of wood.

"Geronimo!" he shouted gleefully, letting the parachute fall. The rising wind caught the toy and dropped it several yards from the woodpile. Robbie giggled and jumped down to retrieve it.

Suddenly his enthusiasm disappeared. He stood looking sadly at the ground for a moment before confusion took hold of him.

"It's not real anymore," he whispered. "Make-believe--not real."

Another gust, this one stronger than the other, claimed the parachute and blew it into a huckleberry bush. Foiled in his rescue mission, Robbie turned slowly to the woodpile.

"Robbie! Robbie, hurry up! The rain's coming," the old woman called through the screen door.

"Yes'm, Granny."

Robbie piled the wood in his arms and stumbled to the porch. The sky was thundering violently when he finally got the rest of the wood to safety. Robbie sat down on the porch to catch his breath.

"My, you're getting to be a strong young man, Robbie. Thank you for getting the firewood in--all by yourself, at that!" said his

grandmother. "Now, don't you think you'd better come in?"

Robbie did not hear. His ears were echoing over and over--"young man, **young man**."

He sat resting his chin on his knee. As he looked toward the empty spot where the woodpile had been, his gaze fell on the huckleberry bush. There, tangled in the branches, was the lifeless parachute. The wind swayed the bush; the crumpled toy dropped silently to the ground.

And then the storm came.

— Carol Cupitt

True Love

A raindrop sparkled on a blade of grass...

You made a ring and placed it on my finger,

And there it shone with irridescent fire...

So soon it faded. Is it thus love dies?

No, love is not a thing of gleaming rainbows,

But pleasures shared and deepest sorrows weathered,

Pride in each other's strength, and tolerance of weakness...

All welded in a band of shining gold.

—Marguerite Ogletree

With Apologies To Chaucer

Smale Jake Hournor
Satte in yon cournor
Eetng his Christmasse pye
He stukke in his thumme
And plucketh out a plumbe
And spek wut a faire ladde am aye.

—Dana Rials

Singe a songe of sixpence
Pockete ful of ryee
Four and twenty black foweles
Baked in a pye
When the pye was opened
The fowles bigynne to singe
Wasse not thet a dainte dyche
To set before ye kyng.

—Marilyn Britt

Poems: Life and Death

Life

Lonely

flowers in fields of

wild

grasses and earthworms moving

underground

while rain

slaps

uplifted faces and sun

scorches

stretching bodies and wind

twists and bends

their slender arms and

tosses

them against each other and snow

covers

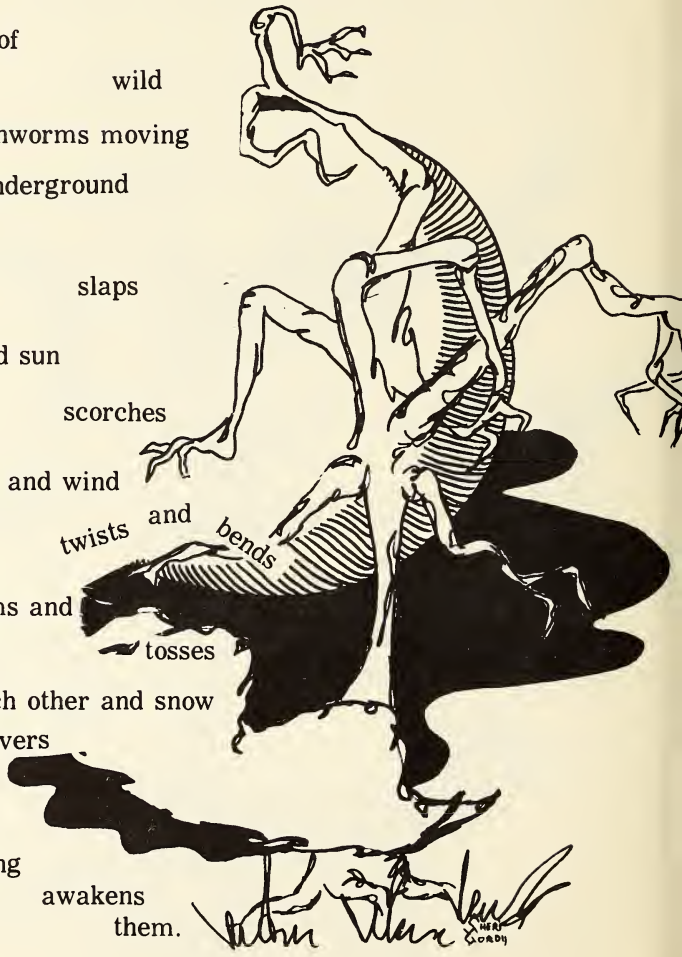
them

till

spring

awakens

them.



O God, I am a flower.

Death

Old Man, I've seen you around before-
at the neighbor's house, in the
hospital, in my own family.

Old Man, yours is an endless duty,
isn't it? You stalk the whole
globe and cast your shadows and
fears and tears to those who
accept you-and to those who don't.

Old Man, you've been around quite
a while, seen a lot, taken a lot,
even given a lot to some.

Old Man, I think about you, and wonder
when you'll come knocking at my
door. How will it affect those
about me? Will it? Or is it true-
time eases all hurt?

Old Man, let me not be forgotten. Let
there be some little good I've done
to someone, somewhere, sometime.
Let me be able to go with you in peace.

Old Man, I'm ready. You don't even have
to knock. My door's open. Let me
go with you.

— Dawn Strait

The Reverie

Once in a whimsical reverie, I found a garden green
Since the reverie, not one garden have I seen
For I ran wildly and freely at the garden's expense
I crushed the flowers, I tore down the fence.

Then the flowers they wept with their pale heads bent
Because all the loamy soil and the showers God sent
Could not repair the tears on their velvety skin
But the rains fell anyway---to wash my skin.

The rain hammered down but then lightened up
As each tender drop tried not to interrupt
My thoughts as they slid from my head to the earth
To be carried by the flowers and given new birth.

They planted my thoughts like seeds everywhere
As petals and stems sped by here and there
I sat in amazement to see their bodies so alive
While they nurtured my thoughts to make them revive.

So due to the flowers labor, more flowers grew
And in my purged heart all the evil I knew
Was washed by the rain and revived as seen
In my whimsical reverie as a garden green.

— Margie Smith

Give Me Courage

Give me courage to explain

how I feel

and strength to accept
what I know,

For to read the words of life
and to understand
is to be able then

to dream dreams

for tomorrow,

when there shall

be hope

and wisdom

to accept life and death.

— Gay Harveston

(In memory of Luther Garrett, Director of Vocational-Technical Division at Copiah-Lincoln from 1962-1968. In January, 1968, he became State Supervisor of Trade and Industrial Education, and he served as Assistant Director for Post Secondary Vocational and Technical Education from July, 1971, until his death in October, 1974.)

Lost and Found Department

Half of the time
I never heard the sirens,
Most of the time
I forgot to speak.
The time I have is always in the past.

She's gone now
Sirens and words will be my only friends
I can't say I'm sorry she's gone
I'm not speaking.
I'll just hang around, and try to make
the things that are mine last.

I'll try to find home while on vacation
I'll try to be happy, from day to day.
I'll listen to the people around me
Try to find pleasure in the things they say.

Sometimes I feel like saying,
"When it's all over, where will we go?"
Or sometimes I say,
"My! isn't it cold?"
Some time I have plenty of.

There're prophets down on Mainstreet,
Any day - you can hear them raving.
I listen, but I know there's a lot
That they're just not saying.

If Mary was a virgin,
Then we're all sons of a gun.
If all they said is true. . .
We're all gonna get shot dead on the run.

So tell me about living,
And places we're all gonna go
Tell me all about "Heaven"
And things I already know.

—Derrell Smith

end too much fc
Angela Matthew

RULES FOR
MICROCOSM LITERARY COMPETITION
COPIAH-LINCOLN ARTS FESTIVAL

Participants

Copiah-Lincoln students and high school students from the counties of Copiah, Lincoln, Lawrence, Simpson, Adams, Franklin, Jefferson

1. Senior Division: college students
2. Junior Division: high school students

Categories

1. Short story--Word limit, 1500
2. Essay--Word limit, 1500
3. Poetry--Limit, 25 line poem
   3 shorter poems on the same theme
4. Drama--One-act play

Rules

1. Only original work is accepted.
2. **Microcosm** reserves right to publish any winning entries.
3. Please keep a copy of the entry, as no manuscript will be returned.
4. Submit no more than one entry per category.
5. Manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of paper.
6. A separate detachable title page must accompany each manuscript stating the following:
   A. Name and address of writer, to appear nowhere else
   B. Title of manuscript, poem or group of poems
   C. Current school
   D. Division and category entered

Deadline

All entries must be postmarked March 1, 1975.

Mailing Address

Microcosm Literary Competition
Copiah-Lincoln Junior College
Wesson, Mississippi 39191

Awards

1. Senior Division--$50 and $25 for each category
2. Junior Division--$25 and $15 for each category

Standard of Excellence

If no entry in a given category meets the standard of excellence of the judges, no awards in that category will be given.

Winners will be notified by mail and awarded the prize on Awards Night.